

Costa Mesa Fire and City Leaders unveil new state-of-the-art Regional Training Center

Costa Mesa Fire, City and State leaders held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Tuesday, Dec. 9 to celebrate the new state-of-the-art Regional Training Center and tower that replaced the aging infrastructure at Fire Station No. 4.

“Our new Training Center is a promise to our Costa Mesa Community,” Fire Chief Dan Stefano said. “A promise that we will never stop moving the needle. Never stop improving. Never stop learning. Never stop leading. And never stop preparing for the moments in time our community and those we serve need us most. The new Training Center is part of our collective Costa Mesa Fire Family Legacy, honoring Our Past, driving Our Present and thoughtfully planting the sustaining seeds of success for Our Future.”

The dynamic new Regional Training Facility was made possible first through seed money from Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine), who secured \$2.5 million in state funding and later from the Costa Mesa City Council, which approved \$2.2 million toward the project.

“I am honored to stand with Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue as we dedicate this new regional training tower and demonstrate our shared commitment to public safety,” said Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Irvine). “By giving our firefighters access to the best training and resources, we are ensuring they can continue to protect our families and keep our neighborhoods safe.”



The new building and training grounds will also be used by neighboring cities and agencies, hence improving the region's preparedness to address fire emergencies and natural disasters while leading to a more resilient and collaborative fire service. The new facility bridges the gap between fire dynamics knowledge and the use of the training building and props for hands-on training.

Mayor John Stephens thanked City leadership for bringing this project to fruition.

"This new state-of-the-art training facility will help to keep our fire fighters and the public safe into the future. There is nothing more important than that." said Mayor John Stephens. "I'm extremely grateful to Assembly Woman Cottie Petrie-Norris for providing the majority of the funding for this project and my council colleagues for funding the balance. Thank you to our contractors and city leadership for

the great work on this facility, especially Fire Chief Dan Stefano and Public Works Director Raja Sethuraman. We rely on our firefighters every day to keep us safe. Now they will do so with greater training and preparation than ever before.”

Also attending the event was District 1 Council Member Mike Buley and District 4 Council Member Manual Chavez.

City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly also welcomed the addition of this new facility.

“Because of the increasing dangers of wildfires, we need our fire crews to be properly trained and ready for this new reality,” Gallardo-Daly said. “This facility will help us and our regional partners stay prepared. I’m proud of Costa Mesa Fire and our Public Works teams for their dedication to this project and providing us with a facility that we can all be proud of.”

Public Works Director Sethuraman thanked his team of engineers for their hard work and dedication to this project.

“We can all be proud of this state-of-the-art facility, which will serve as a regional training home for not only our own firefighters but throughout Orange County. This project includes a five-story prefabricated training tower equipped with multiple features and the latest, most advanced training props available today. The design provides realistic high-rise, residential, and industrial training scenarios that will prepare our firefighters for the complex emergencies they face daily.”

City leaders in attendance included Assistant City Manager Alma Reyes, Police Chief Joyce LaPointe, Finance Director Carol Molina, Economic and Development Services Director Carrie Tai, IT Director Steve Ely, Parks & Community Services Director Brian Gruner and Assistant Fire Chiefs Jason Pyle and Ryan Bohr.



The project used locally sourced and environmentally friendly products and materials.

One of the facets includes water reclamation elements that will also be added to enhance the recovery of water that is used as part of training exercises. The reclamation elements significantly reduce water waste and provide a sustainable training option during times of drought and water conservation.

The building and training grounds includes upgrades to the existing lighting to include energy-efficient fixtures (LEDs) and will include natural light levels. Upgrades will incorporate elements of solar-powered backup energy to be used in case of a power outage. Additionally, low-flow faucets and other features were installed to promote water efficiency and conservation and will include native and drought-resistant landscapes.

Climate change and the drought conditions continue to worsen,

and extreme heat incidents become more frequent and severe.

More than 40 percent of Orange County is designated as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone as assessed by CalFire. The City of Costa Mesa and Orange County will greatly benefit from these upgraded facilities to manage increased demand and mitigate wildfire risk during these events.